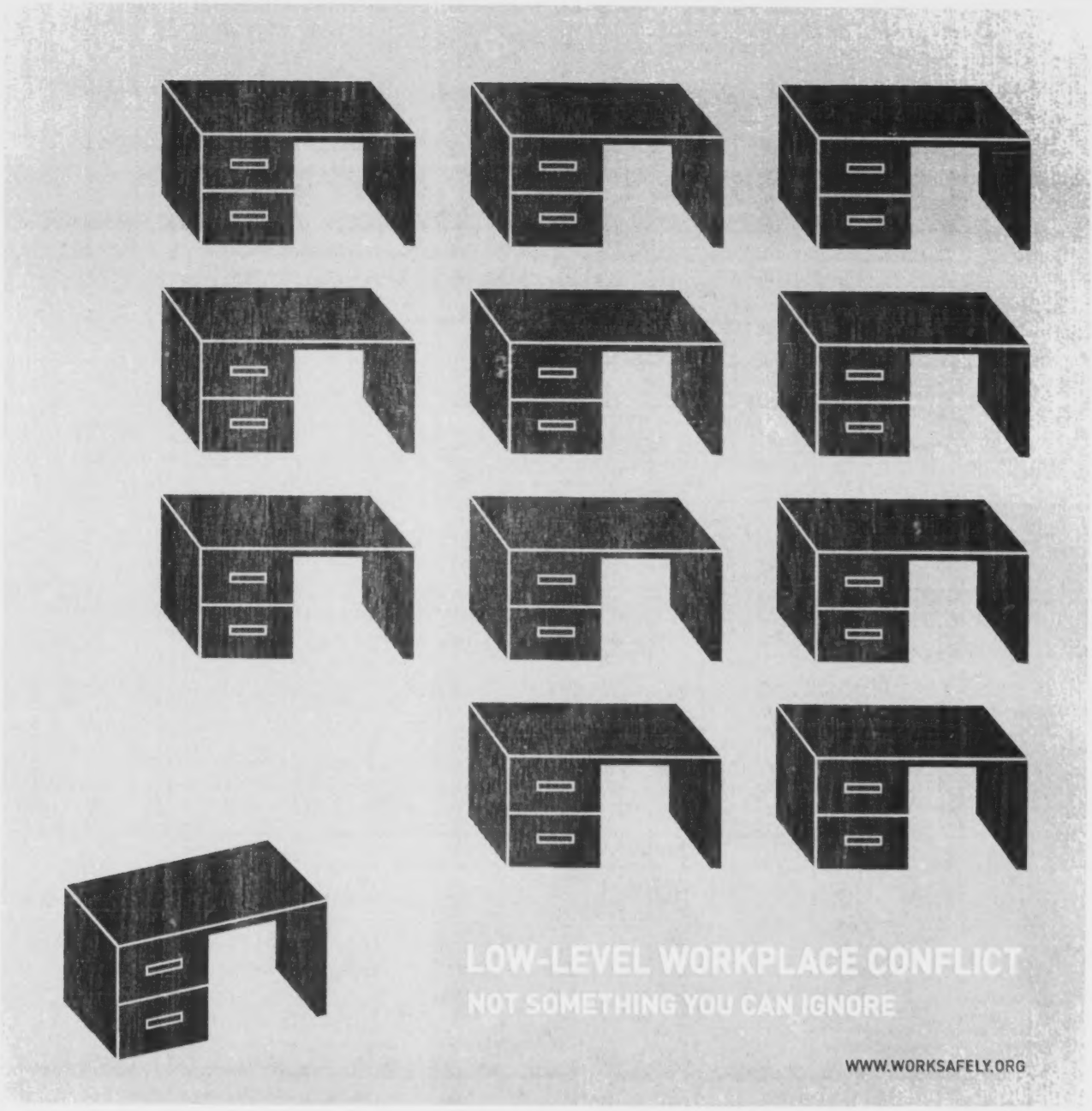
OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH & SAFETY
JANUARY 2008



EFFECTIVE ORIENTATION PREVENTS INCIDENTS

by Scott McIntyre

The initial period of employment is critical. During this phase each worker develops the knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities that are necessary to work successfully. Unfortunately, many fatal or serious injuries happen every year because workers aren't properly informed about workplace hazards or properly trained to do their jobs safely.

Over the past few years CANA Construction has been monitoring the effectiveness of its safety orientation program, which covers all the necessary company policies and provides employees, visitors, subcontractors, owners, consultants and anyone else entering the site with an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. In addition, CANA provides comprehensive health and safety orientation to all new, inexperienced and transferred workers.

Following are just a few of the highlights of our safety orientation program. (See the sidebar for a full list of the major points we cover.)

Orienting foreign workers
In today's booming construction industry, labour shortages are constant, and consequently more and more foreign workers are being hired. This presents employers with the problem of possible language barriers. A safety orientation is a great opportunity to identify any such barriers through personal interaction with workers before they step onto the work site. This type of hazard identification is crucial. To keep the work site safe and productive, we have to find ways to clearly communicate the company's policies and procedures to workers who don't understand English.

Training certificates and worker competency
We ask workers to present documents such as First Aid/CPR and WHMIS certification to help the safety department identify and authenticate employee training and ensure that the required number of First Aid personnel are on site. By obtaining copies of their certification, we not only ensure a safer work site, but also comply with regulatory standards. Other forms of document verification might include any official training a worker has had that is related to his/her trade.

Video presentation
At CANA we present all our new workers/subcontractors and visitors with a short video during orientation. We feel confident that this video, which highlights and emphasizes key areas that need extra attention to safety, is an effective and simple tool to help workers remember and be aware of specific safety concerns. The video also reiterates everyone's roles and responsibilities.

Personal protective equipment
Newly hired workers receive hands-on training in the care, use and maintenance of personal protective equipment. With specialized PPE (which may include fall protection), training is completed in more depth and with greater detail to ensure worker comprehension.

A safety orientation process not only helps workers understand how to work more effectively and safely, but also encourages them to buy into the safety program. Workers believe in a company that they feel is genuinely concerned for their safety and well-being. Once this happens, workers become the eyes and ears on the job. They will assist in hazard identification and are more likely to report a near miss incident. As we all know, not all near misses are reported 100 per cent of the time, and without employees' assistance it is difficult to investigate and prevent potential future occurrences.

We encourage you to take a look at your orientation program, which is more important than ever during these boom times. By monitoring your program's effectiveness, you can minimize the number of injuries and incidents that occur on your work site.

Scott McIntyre, EMT, IFF, is the corporate safety manager at CANA Construction, Calgary.

POINTS INCLUDED IN CANA'S SAFETY ORIENTATION

- Policies, Programs and Procedures
- Right to Know, Participate and Refuse
- Specific Work Rules of the Employer
- Housekeeping Requirements
- Fall Protection
- Excavation
- Hazardous Materials Handling
- Personal Protective Equipment Requirements
- Training Certification
- Vehicle Safety
- Electrical Hazards
- Substance Abuse
- Reporting Procedures
- Emergency Response
- Evacuation Plans
- Worker's Emergency Contact
- Medical/Physical Disabilities

If you're interested in sharing opinions or comments about workplace health and safety issues, please get intouch with the editor through the WHS Contact Centre, 1-866-415-8690, **whs@gov.ab.ca.**

OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH & SAFETY

January 2008, Volume 31, Number 1

Joe Childs Managing Editor
Anita Jenkins Editor

Occupational Health & Safety is an Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry publication. This magazine is published three times a year, in January, May and September. Magazine policy is guided by the Occupational Health & Safety magazine advisory board, which includes members representing both industry and government.

Membership on the Occupational Health & Safety magazine advisory board is open to any resident of Alberta with knowledge and experience in health and safety, and an interest in communicating health and safety information to the public. Anyone who is interested in joining the board should submit a letter of application to the managing editor of the magazine. The board meets three times a year in Edmonton. Board members do not receive remuneration or reimbursement for expenses related to meetings. See "Contacting the Editor," below.

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If there is a discrepancy between statements in this publication and the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation or Code, the legislation takes precedence. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry or the Government of Alberta.

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The magazine is also available as a PDF file at http://industry.alberta.ca/whs-ohsmag.

Contacting the editor. We welcome response to articles or information published in this magazine, as well as suggestions for future articles. You can reach the editor through the Workplace Health & Safety Contact Centre, phone 1-866-415-8690, whs@gov.ab.ca.

Publication Mail Agreement No. 40062521
Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:
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Proofreading by Deborah Lawson
Design and layout by McRobbie Design Group
Printing by Quebecor World Edmonton

ISSN 0705-6052 © 2007

CONTENTS

PERSPECTIVE

| 2 | Effective Orientation Prevents Incidents
by Scott McIntyre

STORIES

| 8 | Low-Level Workplace Conflict
by Mary Anne Gorman

| 11 | The Cultures Are Clashing
by Cheryl Mahaffy

| 14 | Dealing with Affected Families
by Cyrus Gordon

| 16 | Safety for Beauty
by Deborah Lawson

| 20 | Safety Is for Families, Too
by Allan Sheppard

ERGOTIPS

| 19| Don't Always Believe What You Think
by Ray Cislo

MUCH MORE

| 4 | News & Notes
| 6 | Web Watcher
| 7 | Partnership News
| 18 | Real World Solutions
| 18 | From the Courtroom
| 22 | The Last Resort
| 23 | Workplace Fatalities

CHICA-CANADA PROMOTES INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

For more than three decades, CHICA-Canada* has worked to have infection prevention and control recognized as a profession, and to raise awareness of the need to eliminate infections in all sectors of the health care system. CHICA-Canada's ongoing activities include:

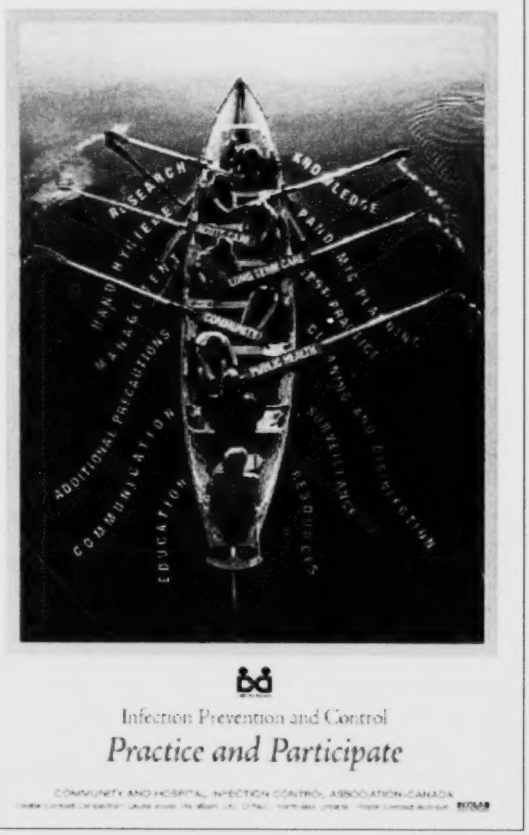
- representation on national and international committees studying professional practices
- patient safety
- accreditation
- public awareness
- stewardship in under-resourced countries in times of crisis

Established in 1976, CHICA-Canada is a national, multidisciplinary, voluntary association of professionals who are committed to improving the health of Canadians by promoting excellent infection prevention and control. The association's 1,400 members work in a variety of health care disciplines, including nursing, medicine, occupational health, medical laboratory technology and epidemiology.

The CHICA-Canada website, www.chica.org, provides its members with up-to-date information, communication and networking opportunities, as well as posters and brochures.

For more information, contact CHICA-Canada at chicacanada@mts.net or 1-866-999-7111.

*Community and Hospital Infection Control Association-Canada



CHICA-Canada Poster

OHS CODE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

A stakeholder working group has been reviewing suggested changes to the OHS Code and will post draft recommendations for public comment early in 2008.

For details, visit http://industry.alberta.ca/whs-codereview or contact Kenn Hample, P.Eng., Safety Specialist Coordinator, at (780) 415-0648 or kenn.hample@gov.ab.ca.

The North American Occupational Safety and Health Week

NAOSH WEEK, MAY 4 - 10, 2008 START TODAY ... LIVE IT EVERY DAY!

The goal of NAOSH Week is to focus the attention of employers, employees, the general public and all partners in occupational safety, health and the environment on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace. A NAOSH Week resource guide is available at www.naosh.ca to assist with your planning. The guide provides event and activity ideas, sample press releases, background information and links to resources.

Work Safe Alberta is proud to support NAOSH Week. Contact us at naosh@gov.ab.ca to let us know about your 2008 activities and events.

NAOSH REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

For information about NAOSH Week 2008 events in your area, contact your regional representative:

North of 60 (Yellowknife) Bruce Graney
(867) 669-4418, bruceg@wcb.nt.ca

Fort McMurray Mulford Clark
(780) 790-5471, clark.mulford@syncrude.com

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Medicine Hat Ron Davis
rondavis5@gmail.com

GHS UPDATE

In 1992 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development agreed to develop a globally harmonized hazard classification and labelling system (GHS) to promote consistent communication of chemical hazards and lessen trade barriers.

Implementation of GHS in Canada will require changes to existing chemical hazard classification and communication systems, including WHMIS. Technical consultations with stakeholders are still underway. Once these are done, the activities that must be completed to implement GHS in Canada include an economic analysis, developing final decisions, drafting regulations, developing the regulatory process and phasing in implementation.

Canadian GHS implementation objectives include harmonization to the greatest extent possible between Canada and NAFTA countries. The United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) released an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in 2006 and is now reviewing the comments received. Discussions between the National WHMIS Office and OSHA are underway. As more information on US deliberations becomes available, Canadian recommendations may need to be revisited.

Canada is working towards implementing GHS in 2008. However, the work that still needs to be done for full implementation will take us beyond this date.

For more information, go to www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/implementation_e.html or visit the Health Canada WHMIS site at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/occup-travail/whmis-simdut/ghs-sgh/index_e.html.

(THE LAST) WEB WATCHER

by Bob Christie

A number of years ago my partner, Alexis MacMillan (now President of Christie Communications), began writing a column about the applications of the Internet. A few years later I took up the challenge. Since that time I have discussed a wide range of topics, including interesting health and safety sites, innovative health and safety applications, and some basic rules for using a search engine.

But now it's become clear that talking incessantly about this "new" technology is increasingly irrelevant and unnecessary. Most readers today understand how to use a search engine to find what they need on the Internet. The technology itself is nearly so commonplace as to be unremarkable. Quite simply, gentle reader, you don't need me as your Internet guide anymore.

Starting with the May 2008 issue, therefore, this column will begin to explore the much broader theme of innovation. For example, I will look at new training packages, new OH&S professional courses and certifications, new methods of keeping track of recertification requirements and literally anything that is new and different as it pertains to advancing the art and science of health and safety. Of course, I will also note anything new and different relating to the Internet.

So, if you are aware of innovations in health and safety, please contact me at bchristie@shaw.ca.

Bob Christie, a partner at Christie Communications Ltd., supplies most of the web link resources for the articles in this magazine.

RECENT ALBERTA BOOKS ABOUT SAFETY

The following safety books by Alberta authors have come to our attention recently.

Dianne Dyck. *Occupational Health & Safety Theory, Strategy and Industry Practice.* LexisNexis Canada, 2007.

Alan D. Quilley. *The Emperor Has No Hard Hat: Achieving REAL Workplace Safety Results.* MBQ Solutions Ltd., 2006. http://safetyresults.ca (Winner, Honourable Mention, *Globe and Mail* Best Business Books of 2006.)

Dennis and Janie Ryan. *Yes You Can... conduct your own safety perception survey.* Compass Health & Safety Ltd., 2007. www.compasshealthandsafety.com.

Laird Wilson and Doug McCutcheon. *Industrial Safety and Risk Management.* University of Alberta Press, 2003. www.uap.ualberta.ca.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS SEPTEMBER 2007 ISSUE

The Work Safe for Life float entered in the 2007 Calgary Stampede Parade (News & Notes) was awarded third prize in the non-profit category. The organizing committee apologizes for omitting the following additional sponsors in the September story: 2W Livestock Equipment, Albion Technical Services, Arpi's North Inc., ESI Energy Services Inc., Garda Security, Gibsons Energy Ltd., Hydra Rig, Lillian Messer, Russel Metals, Sobeys Inc., Spacemakers Construction Services Ltd., Tim Hortons, Tornado Technologies Inc., West Jet.

In "Boot Camps and Interactive Videos," we incorrectly stated that Rig Skills Simulynx is "now a key part of a NAIT certificate." This product is not currently being used in any NAIT program. The Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors also questioned a statement made in this article about safety in the service rig sector. This sector, the CAODC says, "is accustomed to working together on initiatives to ensure this industry remains one of the best-trained and best-equipped in the world."

PARTNERSHIPS NEWS

NEW PARTNERS IN HEALTH AND SAFETY

Welcome to:

- Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE), Edmonton
- ALBI Homes Limited, Calgary
- Association of Canadian Search, Employment and Staffing Services (ACSESS), Calgary

PARTNERSHIPS CHANGES

Michele Allard (seconded from WHS Compliance) and Don Mackenzie, who have joined the Edmonton Partnerships office.

Best retirement wishes to:

- Lanny Wilson, who joined the department 25 years ago and has worked in the Red Deer Partnerships office since 1997. Lanny has made extensive contributions to the program, and she will be missed.
- Jim Painter, executive director, Textile Rental Industry Association (TRIA)
- Mike Joyce, executive director, Manufacturers' Health & Safety Association

John Jacobson, who was executive director of the Continuing Care Safety Association, has moved on to other career opportunities.

NEW SAMPLING STANDARD AND INTERVIEW TABLE

In September 2007 the Certifying Partners approved a new sampling standard and interview table that in most cases will reduce the number of interviews required, especially for employers with large numbers of employees. All Certifying Partners must have the new sampling tables in place no later than January 1, 2009. If this change will affect you, ask your Certifying Partner how they plan to implement this significant program change.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A COR HOLDER HAS A SERIOUS INCIDENT, FATALITY OR OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENT?

Under Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry's employer review policy, holders of a Certificate of Recognition may be directed to conduct a new external audit if they have had a fatality, a serious injury or incident, or repeated non-conformance with the OHS legislation. This policy may also apply to COR holders who have contributed to an incident that affects another employer.

If an employer receives a letter from Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry requiring an external audit of their health and safety system, the employer has 90 days to arrange, complete and submit the audit to the Certifying Partner. The employer can choose the auditor, but the Certifying Partner must approve the choice. The auditor must not have completed any audits for the employer during the previous three years.

Failure to respond within the required timelines results in cancellation of the COR. Audits completed under this program are subject to the usual quality assurance review requirements, and if they are successful a one-year COR will be issued.

NOTES

- When an external audit is completed within 30 days of the event in question, a new external audit will not be required. (Note: Maintenance or internal audits do not qualify.)
- Small Employer COR audits must be conducted by an external auditor.

Partnerships in HEALTH AND SAFETY

Partnerships in Health and Safety is a non-regulatory, province-wide injury prevention program sponsored cooperatively by government, labour and industry. The program offers:

- tools to implement a health and safety management system
- guidance in applying for a Certificate of Recognition (COR)
- potential for premium refunds from the Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta

For more information, call the Partnerships Hotline at 1-866-415-8690 or visit http://industry.alberta.ca/whs-partnerships.

LOW-LEVEL WORKPLACE CONFLICT

NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN IGNORE

by Mary Anne Gorman

John has recently joined the XYZ Company. He comes with an impressive set of qualifications and glowing references. Shortly after his arrival, his supervisor, Molly, notices that John is being isolated from his work team. She sees that when he makes a point during team meetings, his co-workers roll their eyes. Some even wheel their chairs around to face the wall when he is talking. She's also heard the team gossiping around the water cooler about how John thinks he's too good to keep the same hours they do. They make it a practice to come in half an hour early each day, whereas John prefers to arrive at the official start time.

> Conflict that may at first appear trivial has the potential to cause even more serious issues than staff turnover and lost productivity.

Molly asks herself whether she should intervene, but decides it's best to leave well enough alone and let the group work things out for themselves. However, a few weeks later, she is saddened to find John's letter of resignation on her desk.

The costs of conflict

Molly's experience illustrates what can happen when low-level conflict is allowed to fester in the workplace. It also points to the crux of many workplace conflicts—a lack of understanding of the unwritten rules and values in the work environment.

"If a new employee's behaviour violates an organization's unwritten rules, it creates conflict for everyone concerned. Unless the behaviour is addressed early on, it can escalate and lead to lost productivity, absenteeism and other unwanted costs to the organization," says Judy Brooks, managing director of ProActive ReSolutions, an international company with an Edmonton branch dedicated to preventing and managing workplace violence.

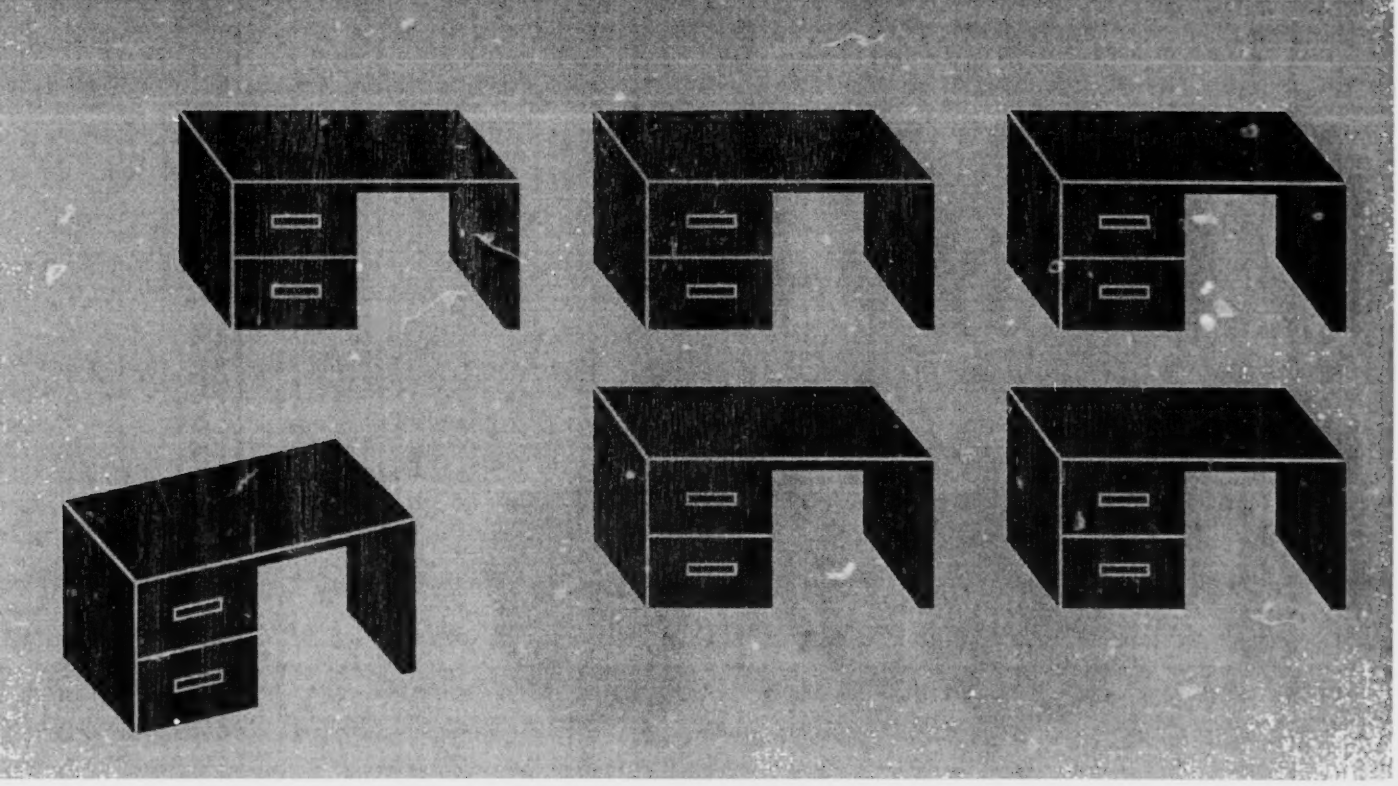
"Ninety per cent of people quit not because of the work but because of the people at work," Brooks says. She cites some other statistics that may surprise aspiring managers. "Managers spend about 50 per cent of their time dealing with conflict. For senior managers who deal with cases that go to litigation, the figure rises to 75 per cent."

If workplace conflict goes unchecked, a valued employee like John may quit. Or an employer may be forced to let an employee go. The loss of the employee's contributions and the lowered staff morale that often comes with reduced productivity is only the half of it. There are also extra costs for recruiting, hiring and training a successor. And as Brooks reminds us, employee retention is already a great challenge in the current Alberta economy.

How conflict can spiral out of control

Conflict that may at first appear trivial has the potential to cause even more serious issues than staff turnover and lost productivity. It can lead to undesirable behaviour such as violations of workplace policy, human rights legislation and even criminal law (see sidebar, "Workplace Conflict Ladder.")

"We can rip the headlines from the newspapers to see just where conflict in an organization can lead," says



Heather Gray, who heads up the Edmonton-based TAMA (Threat Assessment and Management Associates). And, she notes, recent changes to the legislation hold all company stakeholders accountable—from supervisors to chief executives—when a violent event occurs in the workplace.

Conflict management strategies

Early identification of conflict at work is the first step in managing it, advises Charmaine Hammond, president of Hammond Mediation and Consulting Group (Sherwood Park). Hammond trains workers and managers to watch for indicators of conflict and stress such as strained relationships and communication, or changes in hygiene, performance and appearance. She also promotes effective communication skills as a means of addressing conflict early on.

"People must have the confidence to initiate dialogue—the sooner the better, even if it's uncomfortable. When communication becomes strained we start to make assumptions about what people think, want or need. If the assumptions are inaccurate, things become even more constrained. What's exciting is that when people can talk in a safe, respectful manner, sharing common interests or concerns, they often come away with an enhanced relationship. Supervisors should not shy away from this."

Supervisors are well advised to start with the least intrusive approach, for example, a private conversation with the individuals involved. Sources of conflict are not always what they seem. It is all too easy to attribute conflict to personality clashes. But, says threat specialist Gray, "I don't believe there is such a thing as a personality conflict. When we go to the very core, we are talking about a conflict in values."

As well, supervisors may wish to consult with HR and, depending on the nature of the conflict, call in an external expert skilled in conflict management. In Alberta, employers can access a broad spectrum of skills training and mediation assistance, some of which are offered at little or no cost.

Employers need to work at creating an environment of zero tolerance for abuse. They need supportive policies and procedures that cover workplace behaviour, and procedures for reviewing and reporting policy abuse. "If employees feel safe and respected, and if those values and behaviours are modeled by management, employees are more likely to be happy and productive," Hammond says.

We don't get to choose who we work with. When you put together a group of individuals with different personalities and different values, the potential for conflict is always present. What is hilariously presented in the zany TV sitcom, "The Office," is in reality no laughing matter. "Even seemingly minor conflicts may not seem 'low-level' to the people involved," says Gray. "Such issues, when combined with stresses in their personal lives, can be seriously detrimental to a worker's mental and physical health." Creating a respectful working environment, learning to recognize the early warning signs of conflict, initiating conversations and consulting with the experts will all help to manage low-level conflict before it's too late.

Mary Anne Gorman is an Edmonton freelance writer and editor.

RESOURCES

WEB LINKS

http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_vah001.pdf
Workplace Health and Safety (Alberta) Bulletin, Preventing Violence and Harassment at the Workplace

www.alis.gov.ab.ca/pdf/cshop/letstalk.pdf
Alberta Learning Information Service, Let's Talk: A guide to resolving workplace conflicts

http://www.hammondgroup.biz/
Hammond Mediation and Consulting Group

http://www.tamainc.net/
Threat Assessment and Management Associates Inc.

www.proactive-resolutions.com
ProActive ReSolutions Inc.

IN THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT LIBRARY – LABOUR BUILDING

For contact information, see page 22.

VIDEOS

Conflict Resolution in Industrial Facilities
If conflict is allowed to fester and grow without resolution, it can lead to serious problems such as threats and even physical violence. Topics covered include how conflict can disrupt the workplace and how to recognize the common causes of workplace conflict. (DHD 014) This series also includes Conflict Resolution in the Office. (DHD 013)

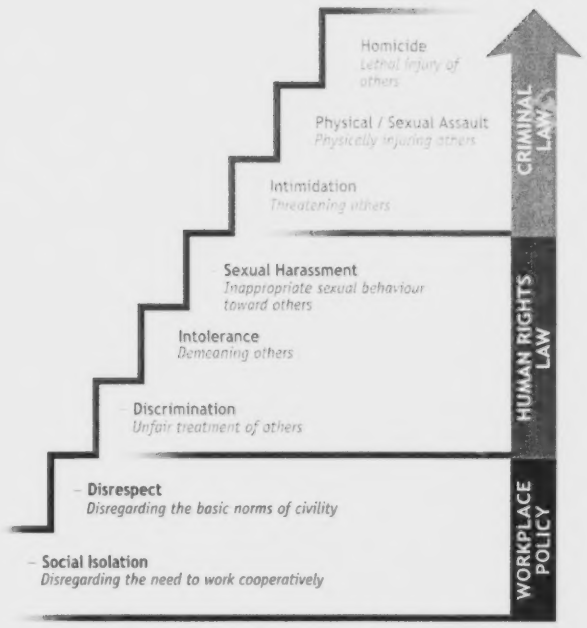
Managing Aggression in the Workplace
How to prevent aggression at work and reduce risk and/or manage it when it happens. (DHD 015)

Eliminating Workplace Bullying
Who are the victims of bullying? What are the effects on the victims? What can a victim do? How do I know if I am a bully? And more. (HRV 213)

In This Together
Seven frontline employees speak directly to their peers about respect and harassment, including dealing with gossip and people who are in a bad mood. A non-threatening opinion survey is used to create a safe environment for viewers to re-evaluate their beliefs and actions. (HRV 253)

WORKPLACE CONFLICT LADDER

THE SYMPTOMS OF WORKPLACE CONFLICT



11 EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF WORKPLACE CONFLICT

1. **People aren't performing.**
2. **People are disengaging.**
3. **People are leaving.**
4. **People are off sick.**
5. **People are breaking the rules.**
6. **People aren't working cooperatively.**
7. **People are talking disrespectfully.**
8. **People are gossiping about each other.**
9. **People are excluding each other.**
10. **People are laying formal complaints.**
11. **People's behaviours are escalating.**

Source: ProActive ReSolutions Inc.

THE CULTURES ARE CLASHING

WHAT'S AN EMPLOYER TO DO?

by Cheryl Mahaffy

Ask Marie Gervais to ponder the connection between multicultural misunderstanding and safety on the job, and the floodgates open. As educational coordinator for the Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations, her job includes fielding requests for help from both employers and workers in a quandary about racism and cultural conflict. "By the time they call, they are desperate," she says. "And in most instances, safety has been compromised."

Issues foreign workers may face

Gervais recalls an Aboriginal man who chalked up an excellent record on several resource jobs before joining a crew where colleagues inflicted cultural slurs and deliberately exposed him to danger. He filed a complaint, but now finds himself blacklisted from work in the oilfield. "Unless workers have allies in the organization or there are clear policies against these practices," Gervais says, "anyone who files a complaint is often doubly victimized."

The victim who haunts Gervais most committed suicide. The only black woman in a manufacturing company, she filed a complaint about repeated racial and gender slurs only to see the abuse escalate. Ideally, the employer would have taken a no-tolerance stance, Gervais observes. "Instead, they called in the instigators, explained that a complaint had been filed and told them to watch their backs."

Not all workplace culture clashes are so blatant, but that doesn't make it harmless, Gervais says. "Let's say you're working with a group and nobody listens to your ideas, but then someone else says the same thing and everyone thinks it's brilliant. The way people look at you, their tone of voice, says 'We don't want you here.' When you feel that, incidents are far more likely to happen because your stress level is high, your concentration is low and you're alienated from the work culture. Plus you can be goaded into going against safety regulations as a way to fit in. But it's never a ticket to belonging." (See also the article in this issue on low-level workplace conflict.)

> No matter how complex the cultural mix, responsibility for ensuring safety rests squarely on employers' shoulders.

As employers in Alberta's hot economy increasingly depend on newcomers to fill labour gaps, language and attitude differences add to the potential for safety missteps, says Yan Lau, senior manager, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry. A newcomer may know how to use a saw, for example, but come from a work culture that considers the safety guard an expendable nuisance. Others may recognize unsafe practices, but fear losing their job (or worse) if they question authority.

The employer's duty

No matter how complex the cultural mix, responsibility for ensuring safety rests squarely on employers' shoulders, Lau notes. Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Act specifically dictates that, as far as reasonably practicable, employers must ensure the health and safety of their workers, avoid endangering any other workers onsite and ensure that their workers are aware of required safety responsibilities and duties. "It does not matter where the workers are from, whether they've been here a day

or a year, whether they are of a different cultural background and language or not—the same rules apply."

Companies convicted of safety negligence face fines up to half million dollars plus six months in jail, and double that for subsequent convictions. A dozen or more employers a year go to court for their misdeeds. What's more, a discordant and improperly trained work site typically translates into significantly higher incident rates—and insurance premiums. "So the impacts are both legal and financial," Lau notes. Not to mention loss of reputation.

Communication is a key antidote, Lau adds. "We can't say workers must be fluent in English, but they must be competent, qualified and trained to do the job safely. Employers have to come up with creative ways to do all the necessary communication." Successful approaches include hiring multilingual supervisors, pairing newcomers with empathetic mentors and offering customized cultural training. Communities can also assist, Lau adds, recalling a group of temporary foreign workers whose transition to Canada was eased by billets with locals who shared similar roots. "But ultimately the employer is responsible to make sure the work is occurring safely."

Cheryl Mahaffy is an Edmonton writer whose work appears in several anthologies, including the 2006 release, Big Enough Dreams.

RESOURCES

WEB LINKS

http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_li015.pdf
Workplace Health and Safety Bulletin, Alberta government definition of due diligence

http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_smb001.pdf
Work Safe Alberta Health and Safety Toolkit (see Section 2: Communications)

IN THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT LIBRARY – LABOUR BUILDING

For contact information, see page 22.

VIDEOS

Diversity: Food for Thought
To grow as individuals and as a company, we must learn how to understand, value and manage diversity in the workplace. Developing communication skills will aid us in this process. (HRV 183)

ONE COMPANY'S SOLUTIONS

Edmonton-based Landmark Group of Builders is as creative as they come in integrating diverse cultures. Fully half of the builder's managers are immigrants, including founder and CEO Reza Nasseri, who came from Iran in 1964. Besides offering English language instruction that is "voluntary, but sometimes a little more than voluntary," the builder sends all employees through intercultural relationship training with NorQuest. The builder also makes extensive use of culturally compatible mentors and makes a point of promoting from within.

"Our growth is totally based on what I learned during years of watching immigrants and Aboriginal people wherever I worked," Nasseri says. "I saw brilliant people doing menial jobs, and I said, 'Somebody has to tap these tremendous resources.' So my brother and I decided to hire on the basis of ability."

Given its multicultural mix, is Landmark a safe place to work? "For two years in a row, we've been selected as the safest homebuilder in Alberta," Nasseri says. "We decided three years ago to hire a full-time safety officer and give him enough power to go out and do his job, even if that means people leave as a result." It's an extension of that same attitude: every worker has dignity; therefore every worker is worth keeping safe.

"We do this because we see extreme value in it," Nasseri says. We have good retention, and people are proud to work here. Of course we want to be socially responsible, but it's self-preservation, really. What some companies don't realize is that doing the right thing makes money."

SETTING THE STAGE

Creating a safe multicultural workplace is not rocket science. Proven approaches are out there, with resources to match. The following individuals shared their expertise as part of a video conference on maintaining a diverse workforce sponsored by the Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations. For more about NAARR services and workshops, email info@naarr.org or call (780) 425-4644.

MAKE DIVERSITY PART OF YOUR CORPORATE DNA

"You've got to set measurable goals and deadlines—and hold people accountable. Every company does that with production; we should be doing the same thing with respect to diversity and inclusion."

– **Walter Andreeff, economic development advisor, BP Noel Major Project**

TAP EXTERNAL EXPERTISE

"Find out what supports and services are available and form strategic partnerships. We're not experts in ESL; we're not experts in settlement. So we work with NorQuest, Catholic Social Services, ASSIST, the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, the Bredin Institute and others."

– **Georgina Fairbank, multicultural employment outreach consultant, City of Edmonton**

EMPOWER YOUR WORKERS

"As a newcomer, you have a really high need to fit in socially, and it takes courage to speak up. Especially if there's a risk the entire operation will stop because of something you say."

– **Cindy Snedden, cordinator, Petroleum Employment Training Program, Northern Lakes College**

CHOOSE LEADERS WHO LISTEN

"It's important for companies to have the right person in charge of safety meetings—someone who is hearing with the heart and mind rather than simply going through the action items on the agenda."

– **Rick Janvier, human resources development manager, Cold Lake First Nations**

DON'T PLAY FAVOURITES

"Avoid assigning tasks based on culture and gender."

– **Cindy Snedden**

DEALING WITH AFFECTED FAMILIES

by Cyrus Gordon

Shirley Hickman is blunt about the way information has been delivered to Canadian families after a serious workplace incident. "I doubt anybody thinks that they were properly dealt with [during a crisis]," she says. "I think that even many companies with emergency policies don't know how to communicate information during a crisis."

Shirley Hickman knows this all too well. Her son, Timothy, was severely burned in a 1996 gas explosion while working at a municipal arena in London, Ontario. He died from his injuries 10 days later.

> How can workplaces better respond to and manage psychological trauma during and after a crisis?

During those 10 days Hickman found herself at the centre of the storm of activity that occurs after most serious workplace injuries. She and her family received a flood of medical updates from hospital staff, accident reports from the enforcement authorities and requests from journalists for statements. They were also bombarded by daily media coverage of the incident and her son's injuries. "I was surrounded by people providing information and asking for information," she recalls. "I didn't know where to turn..."

Hickman's personal experience inspired her to help form Threads of Life, a support association helping families and friends who have suffered a workplace tragedy. As a workplace health and safety advocate, Hickman has become an authority on the emotional dynamics surrounding workplace critical injuries and fatalities. Her suggestions can help workplaces better respond to and manage psychological trauma during and after a crisis.

1. Establish a communication link with the family as soon as possible.
Contact the family about the incident after the crisis communication team has assessed the situation and devised an action plan. This will ensure the family has accurate information and is aware that you are handling the emergency responsibly. "The worst thing that an employer can do is leave the family to others, such as the MOL [Ministry of Labour] and police," stresses Hickman. "When that happens the family becomes bitter toward the employer before they even know the facts."

Make notifying the victim's family about new developments a top priority for the communications team. "Whether it's good or bad news," Hickman explains, "the family must be first to know the whole way through." Consequently, she recommends assigning this responsibility to one member of the crisis communications team. Hickman also recommends that this person provide his/her contact information to the family, "so the family always knows who to call."

2. Build compassion into crisis communications.
Proactive crisis communications is an excellent vehicle for providing a family with continuous support, whether it's information about services available through an employee assistance program, support with media interviews or practical assistance with childcare or transportation.

"Don't wait for the family to ask for help," advises Hickman. "Ask the family what they need, and communicate those needs to the company."

Know what support services are available when you create your communications plan. "All of that has to be thought out in advance," Hickman explains. "You don't want a company representative to say one thing and then go back and be told [by the employer], 'No, we can't do that.'"

3. Manage the flow of information.
During a crisis the communications team must screen new information while maintaining a sense of openness and transparency. This means not withholding critical information, and not avoiding tough questions.

"It's best to get all the workers in for a meeting and share all of the information," says Hickman. "If information cannot be released because it's under legal review or still being investigated, explain this to them. If you're honest, information won't be distorted as it goes through the workplace or the community."

Hickman believes that getting employees onside during a crisis ensures the integrity of communication response and protects families from further stress. "If you establish trust [your workers] will be more likely to cooperate as opposed to feeling that they have to tell their side of the story."

4. After the crisis passes, establish a legacy.
Hickman is frank about the permanent scars left after a workplace fatality. "When you lose someone in an accident or if they are killed in the workplace, life moves forward but there's no such thing as closure."

There are a number of ways a company can recognize the positive legacy of a worker's life. "They can talk about who this person was, the loss to the family and the loss to the community, and how valued this person was as a worker." For example, in 2005 the City of London CUPE locals 107 and 101 sponsored the Tim Hickman Memorial Health and Safety Scholarship for students enrolled in a post-secondary occupational or public health and safety program. Even modest gestures can have a significant emotional impact. "It can be something as simple as sending a card or making a phone call to say, 'We're thinking of your family right now.' "

RESOURCES

WEB LINKS

www.threadsoflife.ca
Threads of Life, a workplace tragedy family support association

www.youngworkerquilt.ca
LifeQuilt [for young workers injured or killed on the job]

www.grieflink.asn.au/workplace.html#workplace-death
Grief Reactions Associated with the Workplace [Australia]

Hickman acknowledges the practical benefits of good crisis communications. "The psychological and economic benefits go hand in hand," she explains. "It reduces the psychological problems and absenteeism rates that go with extreme emotional stress." However, for these benefits to be realized, crisis communications must deliver emotional support to families. "When you are talking about a critical incident or a fatality, you're not just talking about one family, you're talking about the families of all the co-workers," explains Hickman. "They're watching how the company is responding to the family of the worker because it could have been them, and their families."

For information about Threads of Life visit: www.threadsoflife.ca.

Excerpted from "Communicating in a Crisis" by Cyrus Gordon, Accident Prevention, *Jan/Feb 2007.* Accident Prevention *magazine is published by IAPA (Industrial Accident Prevention Association), www.iapa.ca.*

SAFETY FOR BEAUTY

A TANTALIZING TRADE-OFF

by Deborah Lawson

How dangerous can it be to cut hair for a living? Ask a beauty professional who has been in the business for nearly 30 years. Trained in the European method of hair styling and cutting, Ashley Smith is also a qualified esthetician. But her years of experience have opened her eyes to serious deficiencies in the beauty industry.

Smith has come to realize that although global change is necessary, her best opportunities are in tailoring her own business to meet both her needs as a professional stylist and the needs of her special group of chemically and environmentally sensitive clients, whose numbers are increasing steadily. Since nearly 12 per cent of North Americans are allergic to fragrance, Smith's salon has been fragrance- and perfume-free since day one. Lately, she has expanded her work to include consulting with fellow hairdressers who are in trouble.

Threats to salon workers

Every day, hair stylists are exposed to a multitude of chemicals that are either potentially or actually toxic or carcinogenic. Some exposure is by inhalation of chemicals such as ammonia, which can lead to asthma and other respiratory ailments. It's also problematic to have repeated direct contact with chemical-laced products such as shampoos that contain formaldehyde-forming chemicals. Even the latex gloves that are meant to protect skin can lead to allergic reactions in sensitive workers.

"In my experience," Smith notes, "most salon workers develop some kind of contact dermatitis within their first year of working full-time. Respiratory effects, ranging from rhinitis to full-blown asthma, can develop as early as the third year. Rarely do you see someone who's been in the industry for more than 20 years. We're losing our major talent. And on top of that, insurers consider hairdressers to be high risk."

Initially, Smith sold several lines of mineral-based, non-toxic makeup, as well as hair products that use more natural ingredients. When her own environmental sensitivities forced her to move her business into her home, she no longer had the space to carry retail product. However, she is seeing a shift toward greater choice for consumers. "Natural beauty care items used to be available only in health food or vitamin stores," says Smith. "But I'm thrilled to see that mainstream drugstores are stocking an increasing selection of product lines that offer alternatives to harmful chemicals."

Taking the first steps

For owners who want to operate as Smith does, it's hard to find properly trained staff. Presently, no beauty trade school in Alberta offers its students training about chemical hazards or non-toxic alternatives. And those new to the career, who haven't developed the complications faced by some long-term workers, are skeptical about the need for a more chemical-friendly environment. "People haven't been educated to understand that it isn't only heavy industry that faces problems with toxic materials," says Smith.

> "People haven't been educated to understand that it isn't only heavy industry that faces problems with toxic materials."

Smith believes industry workers would be safer and healthier if they used salon products made without ammonia, parabens, formaldehyde or sodium lauryl sulphate (which, incidentally, are safer for clients as well, since the best level of these dangerous chemicals is zero). Such safer products are not a whole lot more expensive, and take no longer to apply or use.

Why, then, don't more salon operators use them? Lack of awareness about alternatives is the primary reason. Product representatives do not make salon clients aware of the dangers posed by continual and long-term use of their products, nor do they offer less-toxic alternatives.

Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Act makes employers responsible, as far as is reasonably practicable, for the health and safety of their workers. One aspect of

Ashley doing a spiral perm

this responsibility is the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), a national system implemented in 1988 to ensure provision of adequate hazard information about chemicals used at work sites. This information passes from suppliers and distributors, through the employer, to the employee.

But according to Diane Radnoff, senior occupational hygienist at Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry, the beauty industry presents some special challenges. "It's complicated," says Radnoff. "For one thing, not all hazardous products are covered by WHMIS. And even though a supplier can create a material safety data sheet (MSDS) for a product they sell, we have no jurisdiction to make sure the information is accurate, or even good."

Hazardous materials that are not categorized as controlled products are simply known as "harmful substances," and it's up to individual industries to establish what these harmful substances are. Existing WHMIS legislation does not include salon chemicals in its list of controlled products. They are mentioned only indirectly, in the "partially excluded products" section, as "cosmetics, devices, and foods and drugs that are covered by the Food and Drug Act." As a result, specific hazard information and safe work procedures are conspicuously absent. Employers, however, must still provide WHMIS training for workers using or working near such products.

Occupational exposure limits indicate the maximum amount of a regulated substance to which a worker can be exposed in a typical eight-hour shift. But, as Radnoff notes, "Some workers may be sensitive to concentrations much lower than the norm. In those cases, employers must protect those workers, both by knowing the industry standard and by researching into best practices. It goes to due diligence."

Deborah Lawson is a freelance writer and editor in Edmonton. She recently won first prize in a poetry contest sponsored by Other Voices *magazine.*

WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS IN THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY DO?

To keep workers safe from hazards related to the use of chemical beauty products, employers can:

- educate their employees about the hazards of repeated exposure to proven toxins
- train stylists to cut and style using as little hair product as possible (which is a benefit for clients doing their hair at home, as well)
- provide products with the least possible amount of toxins (and fragrance-free whenever possible)
- be conscious of all chemicals used in the business, even laundry soap, cleansers and non-chemical service products
- ensure the business premises are mould-free and well ventilated
- advocate for the inclusion of beauty-related hazardous products in WHMIS
- ensure that harmful substances and/or their containers are clearly identified
- establish procedures and implement employee training to minimize workers' exposure to harmful substances
- train workers about the health hazards associated with exposure to harmful substances, and ensure they know how to respond appropriately to those health hazards

RESOURCES

WEB LINKS

www.wcb.ab.ca/workingsafely/stories/hairdrs.asp
WCB-Alberta: Beauty and the Beast

www.cieh.org/ehn/focus_on_health_and_safety/articles/the_hair_and_beauty_industry_and_health_and_safety.htm
Chartered Institute of Environmental health: The hair and beauty industry

www.cosmeticsdatabase.com/index.php?nothanks=1
Skin Deep safety database

http://unionsafe.labor.net.au/hazards/1060147067219 42.html
UnionSafe (Australia) Hairdressing, Nail and Beauty Safety

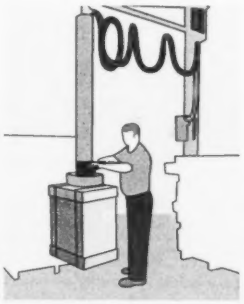
An Alberta government list of websites that deal with safety in the beauty salon industry is available at **http://employment.alberta.ca/cps/rde/xchg/hre/hs.xsl/364.html#2**

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS HAVE YOU MADE AT YOUR WORKPLACE?

If you've found a solution worth sharing, please send it to ray.cislo@gov.ab.ca.

VACUUM LIFTERS

The Problem
Workers are required to repeatedly lift heavy and sometimes large product boxes and place them on pallets. Repeated lifting and twisting can lead to back and arm injuries.

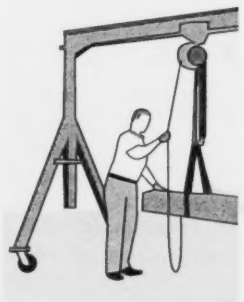


The Solution
Mechanize this type of material handling. Vacuum lifters lift like a hoist without needing clamps or straps. Loads are held firmly in place by a large area suction pad.

Benefits
The workplace enjoys Improved productivity and a reduced likelihood of worker injury.

PORTABLE GANTRY CRANES

The Problem
A heavy and awkward load must be moved around a production facility. A forklift truck is too expensive and a pallet jack won't work in all situations.



The Solution
Portable gantry cranes are adjustable in height. They can be fitted with manual, electric, or pneumatic hoists for moving heavy loads over short distances.

Benefits
This inexpensive alternative to a forklift allows workers to move loads of various sizes without having to manually lift and lower them.

FROM THE COURTROOM

by Tamara Trull

Creative Sentencing Puts Millions into Safer Workplaces

In December 2002 the Alberta legislature gave the court the power to direct that fines from occupational health and safety violations be used to improve health and safety on Alberta work sites or to support training and educational programs. Since then, over $2 million has gone into such court-directed initiatives, and "creative sentencing" is now considered in almost all cases.

One of the most recent creative sentences saw $95,000 directed to Threads of Life, a national not-for-profit organization. The funds will be used to create a family support program in Alberta for victims of occupational health and safety incidents. Additional recipients of creative sentencing have included Stars Air Ambulance, St John Ambulance, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the Firefighters Burn Unit, the Job Safety Skills Society, the Alberta Construction Safety Association and a steel safety committee. Another creative sentence provided funding to create an informational DVD for victims.

Alberta's regulatory prosecutors are working hard to keep the sentences truly creative and to ensure that prevention is a key ingredient for any potential recipient or initiative. Creative sentencing has done what the legislature intended it to do. It is creating safer workplaces for Albertans.

To suggest topics for future columns, please send a message to Brian.Caruk@gov.ab.ca.

This is the last From the Courtroom column by Tamara Trull, Crown Prosecutor in the Occupational Health and Safety Prosecution Unit of Alberta Justice. In the fall of 2007 Tamara took an in-house counsel position. We thank her for her valuable contribution to the magazine for more than three years (since September 2004). The column will continue—watch for a new columnist in the next issue.

DON'T ALWAYS BELIEVE WHAT YOU THINK

by Ray Cislo

A worker driving a heavy haul truck at a mine site needs to get his last load of the day to the dumping area. The driver is very focused on the task, to the point of being oblivious to the pick-up truck parked in his line of travel. His eyes may have "seen" the pick-up truck but his mind says, "According to my model, it's not supposed to be there. Therefore it's not." Whereupon the driver proceeds and flattens the pick-up truck. His response? "I didn't see it."

The team reviewing such an incident might recommend installing some type of sophisticated object detection system on the truck. Although this recommendation seems sound, it increases the driver's dependency on a technological solution. The whole system becomes more complex and therefore even more prone to incidents.

In this case, the cause will likely be described as "human error," suggesting there was a foolish act on the part of the person involved or a lack of training. But this all-too-familiar approach fails to adequately explain what really happened or consider how complex human beings really are.

People often operate in a world created within their minds, one that is based on their knowledge, training and past experiences. These mental models form the basis, not only for how we act but for what we perceive and believe. They can lead us into performing automated, unthinking actions.

Despite the common investment advice, "Past performance does not guarantee future results," we generalize into the future from what has worked in the past. If we get through a sketchy situation without incident or injury, we must have done something right. We are rewarded, at least mentally, for our success. This success reinforces our actions and behaviours, albeit in a negative way. A worker may say "I've done it this way (unsafely) for 10 years and nothing has ever happened. Why should I change?"

The analysis of this human performance issue comes from the worlds of psychology and human factors, the latter a branch of ergonomics. So be aware of this human tendency, and slow down. Live in the moment and understand what is going on around you. Stop, examine and question what you are doing.

Some wildland firefighters in the midst of a blaze stop at regular intervals to assess where they are, what they are doing and whether their actions still makes sense. They stop to check that the mental model they are using is still valid under present conditions, and then they make any necessary adjustments.

Remember to check in with yourself. Don't always believe what you think.

Ray Cislo, P.Eng., B.Sc.(H.K.) is a safety engineering specialist at Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry.

RESOURCES

Charles Perrow. Normal Accidents: Living With High-Risk Technologies. Basic Books, 1984. (Available at the Alberta government's Labour Library, call number T 84 P47 1984.)

Laurence Gonzales. Deep Survival — Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why. W.W. Norton & Company, 2003. **www.deepsurvival.com**

Laurence Gonzales. "Why smart people make dumb mistakes (and how you can avoid them)." National Geographic Adventure Magazine, August 2007. **www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/survival/skills/index.html**

SAFETY IS FOR FAMILIES, TOO

by Allan Sheppard

The *Family Safety* book has a proud history.

It started as a modest initiative involving Calgary-based Colt Engineering and its client, Suncor Energy. Suncor's Firebag Project near Fort McMurray came up with the idea. Then Colt Engineering embraced it and expanded it to anchor a corporate family safety program for all divisions of their company. Now, following its purchase of the Colt Group in 2007, WorleyParsons, an Australian engineering firm with 23,500 personnel in 32 countries, has adopted the book as well.

Along the way, the *Family Safety* book contributed to Colt's receiving a 2007 Innovation in Safety Implementation Award from the Construction Owners Association of Alberta and much positive feedback from workers, contractors and industry colleagues.

"Off-the-job safety programs are not new to the industry," says Rob Simpson, the Colt WorleyParsons health, safety and environment coordinator who led the book's development. "They've been around for a long time."

What seems innovative about Colt's program, though, is that it succeeded. "My experience with off-the-job safety programs has been negative," Simpson says. "The safety culture within the organization wasn't at a high enough level that people supported it."

In the wrong culture, workers feel off-the-job programs are being "shoved down their throat," Simpson adds, and that their off-the-job behaviour "is none of the company's business." Simpson says no safety program can succeed without management's support and participation.

Colt's safety culture was receptive. That wasn't an accident, says Hugo Scheepers, Colt WorleyParsons' health, safety and environment manager. "Safety," he believes, "is inspiring people to be self-accountable, having them do things they had a hand in creating. Then they are willing to do something because they want to rather than because we are telling them they have to."

> The challenge in developing the book was to keep it user friendly.

Simpson says the challenge in developing the book was to keep it user friendly. The language is simple. Scheepers also points to the "eye-appealing" work of graphic artist Shelly Mercer. The content is in checklist format, and the pages are laminated to allow families to repeatedly use an erasable marker as they review the content.

The contents cover a comprehensive range of topics. Some are typical of work-related safety concerns: emergency contacts, first aid, fire prevention, fall prevention, use of protective equipment. Others are typical of home and recreational situations: poison prevention,

WHY SHOULD EMPLOYERS BE INTERESTED IN OFF-THE-JOB AND FAMILY SAFETY?

"Even a minor injury (incurred on or off the job) can have severe consequences for self and family. It means added stress in the family and on the job."

— Kathy Belton, co-director, Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research, University of Alberta

"On the human side, [we] do not want any of [our] employees or families to be involved in any type of incident. From a business perspective, quality and productivity can diminish due to our valuable, skilled employees being absent. When our employees are distraught because of friends or family members being involved in an incident, this decreases job performance and ... puts people at risk by not being mentally prepared ..."

— Larry Benke, P. Eng, managing director, WorleyParsons Canada

playground safety, water safety, cycling safety, snow-shovelling safety, child safety seats. Some sections cover personal health and well-being, for example, handling stress, healthy eating and physical activity.

The book also contains an incident report that workers can use to share details of and insights from off-the-job incidents during the "safety moments" that begin every meeting at Colt WorleyParsons. Using the report, like every other aspect of the program, is voluntary.

The content came from a variety of sources. A committee helped with the first phase of development. Simpson also borrowed material from the Internet and other companies' publications.

The content will evolve, says Scheepers, to incorporate new information and reflect experience with the program. When *Family Safety* is adopted in other WorleyParsons regions, it is adapted to local conditions. There's no need for a section on winter driving in Indonesia, and no risk of hitting a moose on the road in Australia (think kangaroos, instead).

Rob Simpson gives credit for the book's success to several other initiatives that support the program. These initiatives are all division-driven and supported by division management. Some examples include family sessions on using a fire extinguisher, safety colouring calendars for children, employee vendor discounts for safety equipment and fitness training, and an annual flu-shot clinic that is open to employees' families.

For more information, contact Hugo Scheepers, Health, Safety & Environment Manager, Colt WorleyParsons, scheepers.hugo@colteng.com.

Allan Sheppard is a freelance writer and researcher who commutes between his homes in Edmonton, Alberta, and Atlin, B.C.

Contact us any time
For occupational health and safety information and assistance, or to order Workplace Health & Safety publications, phone the Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690 toll free in Alberta (415-8690 in Edmonton and area) or visit http://industry.alberta.ca/whs-contact

Sign up for Workplace Health & Safety news
To be notified by e-mail of all new Workplace Health & Safety website postings, sign up for a FREE subscription service through http://industry.alberta.ca/whs-subscribe

Alberta Government Library - Labour Building Site
To review the large selection of occupational health and safety information materials available through the Alberta government, go to http://employment.alberta.ca/library

To borrow materials, either contact your local library and make your requests through the inter-library loan system or visit the Alberta Government Library:

3rd floor, 10808 - 99 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 0G5

Library phone
(780) 427-8533

Audio-Visual Services phone
(780) 427-4671

To reach either of the above numbers toll-free in Alberta, dial 310-0000 followed by the area code and phone number.

Library fax (780) 422-0084

Workplace Health & Safety is an Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry program that falls under the jurisdiction of Minister Iris Evans.

THE LAST RESORT

REPORTING ON RECENT CONVICTIONS UNDER THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT

Between May and October 2007 seven employers were prosecuted under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Churchill Industrial Group Ltd. On November 14, 2004, a worker's lower leg was amputated after the rear wheel of a forklift ran over his leg and pelvic area. Churchill Industrial Group pleaded guilty, as a prime contractor, to failing to ensure that the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations were complied with in respect of the work site. The employer received a total penalty of $100,000, including a payment of $95,000 to the Threads of Life Workplace Tragedy Family Support Association.

Enercon Products Ltd. On October 21, 2004, two workers were seriously injured when they fell approximately 5.4 metres from the roof of a two-storey residential home under construction. Enercon Products pleaded guilty to failing to ensure the health and safety of workers. The employer received a total penalty of $70,750, including a payment of $65,000 to the Alberta branch of the Canadian Home Builders Association for safety training programs.

Kal Tire. On November 26, 2003, a worker was seriously injured when his arms were pulled into a rubber mill's rollers while it was still operating. Kal Tire pleaded guilty to failing to ensure the health and safety of workers and received a total penalty of $80,500.

Kelkur-West Renovations Inc. On July 6, 2004, two workers received serious electric shock injuries while raising a scaffold pole at a construction site. The scaffold pole contacted a live 14,400-volt overhead power line. Kelkur-West Renovations pleaded guilty to failing to ensure the health and safety of workers. The employer received a total penalty of $75,000, including a payment of $70,000 to the Foothills Hospital Burn Unit.

Medican Developments Inc. On March 27, 2003, a worker who was installing siding was seriously injured when he fell from an unguarded fourth-floor balcony of a condominium construction project. Medican Developments pleaded guilty, as a prime contractor, to failing to ensure that the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations were complied with in respect of the work site. The employer received a total penalty of $100,750, including a payment of $95,000 for an employment training program at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

New Concept Contracting. On April 27, 2004, a worker was killed when an unattended backhoe that was left running rolled into a trench where a worker was cleaning the conduits. The employer pleaded guilty to failing to ensure the health and safety of workers and received a total penalty of $350,000.

Westcon Precast Inc. On October 1, 2003, a concrete septic tank form (plug) was being held about 1.5 metres above ground with an overhead bridge crane when it fell on and killed a worker. Westcon Precast pleaded guilty to failing to ensure the health and safety of workers. The employer received a total penalty of $200,750, including a payment of $195,000 to the Manufacturers Health and Safety Association to enhance their training facility.

For details, go to http://industry.alberta.ca/whs-prosecutions

WORKPLACE FATALITIES

Investigated in Alberta

July – October, 2007

Most work-related incident fatalities that fall under provincial jurisdiction are investigated by Workplace Health & Safety. In general, highway traffic, farm, disease or heart attack fatalities are not investigated.

In many cases, investigation into these fatalities is continuing. Final investigation reports are filed at the Alberta Government Library – Labour Building site and can be reviewed there or at http://industry.alberta.ca/whs-fatalities.

From January to October 2007, Workplace Health & Safety investigated 29 workplace fatalities, as compared to 32 in 2006 over the same time period. For further information about comparing trends in fatalities over time, please see the Occupational Fatalities in Alberta report:

http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_10yr_fatal.pdf

A 41-year-old pump tech's arm was severed when his coveralls were caught in a progressive cavity pump test bench shaft. The worker died from his injuries.

A 53-year-old oilfield consultant who was directing a pressure testing operation at an abandoned well site was killed by the explosion of an elbow near a pressure gauge.

A 42-year-old welder sustained fatal injuries from being pinned between two vessels. The welder and two other workers were using an overhead crane and a sling to rotate an 8,600 kilogram vessel onto its legs.

A 51-year-old vehicle operator sustained fatal injuries from being pinned between a truck with a trailer and another truck.

A 31-year-old scraper operator was working with another operator to level soil at a construction site. She indicated that she was going to the washroom after the two operators had met with the site supervisor, away from their machines. The second operator returned to work, and when emptying the second load he discovered the body of his co-worker in the bowl of his machine.

A 22-year-old mechanical bull operator was killed when the handle on a mechanical calf-roping ride sprang forward and struck him in the back of the head.

A 47-year-old pipework insulator died from a fall in an industrial building, either from a catwalk 10.6 metres above floor level or from scaffolding 4 metres above the catwalk (there were no witnesses). The worker fell onto a zoom boom parked in the building and then to the floor.

A 49-year-old black paper and wire installer was killed while working at a residential construction site. The worker tried to climb from a 2.3-metre tall section of the structure to a 3.2-metre level, but fell, struck a crossbar and landed on the ground.

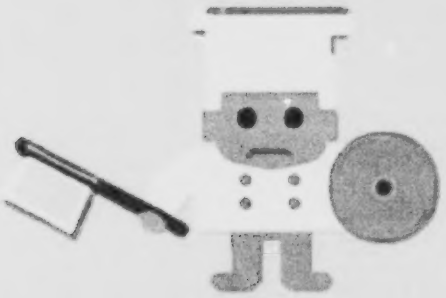
A 52-year-old electrician died from a fall down a set of stairs while servicing and maintaining equipment.

An 80-year-old shop hand who was wiring a light box from a ladder died after falling and striking his head on a concrete floor.

A 51-year-old labourer died after being struck by the rear wheels of a logging truck.

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:
CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT
Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry
Workplace Partnerships (Director's Office)
7th Floor, Labour Building
10808 - 99 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5K 0G5
E-mail whs@gov.ab.ca

Publications Mail Agreement Number 40062521
ISSN 0705-6052 © 2008



WORK IS NO VIDEO GAME.

You don't fight the boss to move up a level. You shouldn't have to duck, dodge, or scramble during the workday. And if you die, you won't come back to life. Your choices have real consequences. Shields up, rookies!

HEADS UP
work smart. work safe.

www.wcb.ab.ca

A message from Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry, the Alberta Construction Safety Association, Manufacturers' Health and Safety Association, Alberta Hotel Safety Association and Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta.